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UNCLAS PRETORIA 001575

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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TREASURY FOR BRESNICK
DEPT PASS USTR FOR PCOLEMAN, WJACKSON AND DDWOSKIN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [SF](#) [WTO](#)

SUBJECT: WTO SERVICES NEGOTIATIONS: SOUTH AFRICA'S INITIAL
OFFER

REF: (A) State 58384; (B) Pretoria 847

(U)Sensitive but unclassified; not for Internet
distribution.

1. (SBU) In response to reftel A points encouraging South Africa to submit a robust initial services offer, Sudhir Sooklal of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said that South Africa does intend to meet the May deadline for submitting its offer in Geneva. He noted that when DTI Minister Mpahlwa came back from a G20 meeting in New Delhi last month, he instructed his staff to set up a meeting with his cabinet colleagues to discuss the offer. Unfortunately, they have not been able to get the meeting off the ground. It was supposed to be this week, but could not take place because the Minister went to the DRC. They hope the cabinet meeting will take place next week. Once the cabinet is driving the process at the ministerial level, DTI expects to be able to move a lot quicker.

2. (SBU) Sooklal noted DTI has been engaging the various departments continuously, almost on a daily basis, on the sectors we raised. "It's a work in progress," he said. They are still waiting for the other departments to come back to DTI with what they are willing to put on the table. That process is complete as far as Treasury is concerned (i.e., financial services, also noted in ref B). As soon as the other departments have signed off on the offer, DTI plans to put the offer in the required format and table it in Geneva. He reiterated that the Minister is aware of urgency of it, which why he wants the meeting with cabinet colleagues to discuss the specific issues.

3. (SBU) Sooklal did note a bit of a problem with the telecommunications services sector because of the new convergence bill that is going through Parliament. He said they were somewhat reluctant to make an offer until the bill becomes an Act. He said the convergence bill would totally transform the entire ICT sector. Even with that constraint, however, he was optimistic that South Africa would still be able to put something down.

FRAZER